



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL CAPITAL MEMORIAL ADVISORY COMMISSION

1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20242

FEB 11 2014

Mrs. Judith Young
Gold Star Mothers National Monument Foundation
30 Eraser Road, 1st Floor
Moorestown, NJ 08057

Dear Mrs. Young:

The National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (Commission) was established by the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. § 8901 et seq.) (the Act). As you are aware, the Act requires the Commission to consult with sponsors of memorials on matters relating to site and design of memorials to be established on lands subject to provisions of the Act.

On December 12, 2013, the Commission met with the Gold Star Mothers National Monument Foundation (Foundation) and your architect, James Cummings, AIA, to provide informal comment on potential sites for the Gold Star Mothers Memorial (Memorial). The Commission appreciated your recommendation of four sites that you consider to be the best choices at this time: (A) Pershing Park, (B) the Belvedere at the Potomac River terminus of Constitution Avenue (C) the Holly niche on Memorial Avenue, and (D) parkland adjacent to Memorial Avenue and west of the Arlington National Cemetery Visitor Center. According to your analysis, sites (C) and (D) were best able to meet most or all of the eleven site selection criteria.

Speaking on behalf of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Katry Harris took note of the Foundation's expressed interest in minimizing risk of conflict with historic properties. Ms. Harris also suggested the Foundation consider opportunities for the memorial with the ongoing redevelopment at the Walter Reed complex and the Veterans Administration Hospital.

The Commission agreed with the importance of a tangible connection to Arlington National Cemetery and your conclusion that Sites (A) and (B) would not provide that connection. Commissioners saw opportunity for this connection on Sites (C) and (D), but recognized that the memorial needs to provide a contemplative setting, and advised that it might be difficult to create a sense of enclosure in the space allowed in a holly niche on the heavily-trafficked Memorial Avenue.

The Commission also heard comments from representatives of the Secretary of the Army and the Executive Director of Army National Military Cemeteries. These representatives expressed support for the establishment of the memorial, but several concerns were expressed regarding Site (D), including potential conflicts with underground utilities, visitor transportation issues, and the need for future expansion of the Cemetery.

The Commission recognized the concern about the utility corridor but also expressed its understanding that the proposed memorial would likely be small enough to be located at Site (D) without substantial interference with the utilities. The Commission also noted that the heavy visitor traffic to and from busses providing transportation for visitors within the Cemetery might conflict with the contemplative nature of the Memorial. However, the Commission also recognized that the memorial should be visible to cemetery visitors and that it seemed possible to design a memorial at Site (D) which would provide both visibility and an appropriate sense of enclosure and contemplation.

Enclosed, for your reference, is a transcript of the discussion with you at the December 12, 2013, meeting. The Commission commends you on your thorough examination and initial evaluation of potential sites. We look forward to consulting with you as you continue through the process of establishing this memorial.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter May', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter May, Chairman,
National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission

Enclosure